INTRODUCTION

EUSEBIUS in his *Ecclesiastical History*[1] states that Justin's *Second Apology* was addressed to Marcus Aurelius when he was sole emperor (169-180). But modern critics assign both apologies to the latter part of the reign of Antoninus Pius (i.e., 147-161), and some conjecture that its addressees are the same as those of the *First Apology*.[2]

The *Second Apology* came down to us in two manuscripts,[3] in which it precedes the *First Apology*. In the original Greek edition[4] as well as in the first Latin translation[5] this sequence is preserved. However, it was pointed out above[6] that the second followed the first, not as an appendix but as an independent petition, although it may have been written only shortly after the first. This would place its composition between 155 and 160, at Rome.

This short address of fifteen chapters was provoked through the execution of three Christians by Urbicus, the prefect of Rome. Because they had been condemned to death *only* because they were Christians, Justin opens his address by accusing the Romans of injustice.

---

1 4.15.18.
2 Cf. below, p. 121 nn.2 and 3.
3 Cf. above, p. 26 n. 15.
4 Cf. above, p. 26 n.16.
5 Cf, above, p. 26 n.17.
6 Cf. above, p. 25f.

Then he goes on to answer these two sarcastic questions: (1) If the Christians desire so earnestly to see God, why do they not commit suicide and save their enemies the trouble of killing them? (2) If their God has the power to help Christians, why does He permit their enemies to oppress and punish them?

In answer to the first query, Justin explains that man is not master of his own life. In replying to the second question, he shows that the persecution of the Christians is due not only to man's free will, but also, and this especially, to the hatred of the demons. After proving the superiority of Christianity over paganism, Justin brings the Apology to a close by exhorting the rulers to show justice in their treatment of Christians.

The reader will do well in reading the introduction to the *First Apology* and consult the *Select Bibliography* on page 27 of this volume.

CONTENTS

Chapter		*Page*
1	Preface	119
2	Three Christians executed by Urbicus	120
3	Crescens the Cynic	122
4	The reasons why Christians do not commit suicide	123
5	The bad angels	124
6	The meaning of the Divine Names	125
7	Christians are the cause of the preservation of the universe	126
8	Participation in the Word a cause of persecution	127
9	Eeternal punishment by fire	128
10	Christ the Logos	129
11	Vice and virtue	130
12	The Christians' attitude toward death proves their innocence	132
13	The seminal word	133
14	A request that the petition be published	134
15	Conclusion	134

THE SECOND APOLOGY OF JUSTIN TO THE ROMAN SENATE IN BEHALF OF THE CHRISTIANS

Chapter 1

THE THINGS that have lately[1] taken place in your city under Urbicus,[2] and the evil deeds that are likewise being perpetrated without reason by your governors, have forced me to compose this address for you Romans who are men of feelings like ours and are our bethren,[3] even though you fail to realize it or refuse to admit it because of your pride in your so-called dignities. Everywhere, indeed, whoever is chastened by father, or neighbor, or child, or friend, or brother, or husband, or wife for any shortcoming, such as being stubborn, and pleasure-loving, and difficult to urge to good (except those who believe that the wicked and sensual shall suffer the punishment of eternal fire, but that the virtuous and Christ-like, *i. e.*, those who have become Christians, shall live with God free from all pain)—these and the wicked demons who hate us so, and have as their slaves and worshippers such men as the above-mentioned judges, compel them, like rulers under demoniacal influence, to put us to death. That you may clearly understand the reason for all that took place under Urbicus I will now tell you just what happened.

1 *Kaì tà chthès dè kaì próen*: 'both yesterday and the day before,' a Homeric expression.

2 Urbicus was consul and prefect of Rome under the Emperor Antoninus Pius.

3 Tertullian (*Apol.* 39) aptly expressed this thought: *Fratres autem etiam vestri sumus, iure naturae matris unius, etsi vos parum homines, quia mali fratres.*

Chapter 2

There was a certain woman who lived with an unchaste husband, and she, too, had once been unchaste. After learning the doctrines of Christ, she became a self-controlled person and she tried to effect a similar change in her husband, explaining the Christian teachings and warning him of the eternal punishment by fire reserved for those who live without chastity or right reason. But by clinging to the same shameful conduct he lost his wife's affections, and she desired a divorce from him because she considered it sinful to live any longer with a husband who sought in every way those means of sensual pleasure contrary to the law of nature and in violation of every right. However, she forced herself to stay with him after her friends convinced her that it was advisable to remain with him in the hope that at some future time he might change his ways. But when her husband went to Alexandria and the report reached her that his conduct was worse than ever, she, in order not to participate in his sinful and impious acts by continuing to live with him by sharing his table and his bed, gave him what you term a bill of divorce[1] and left him. But that gallant and gentlemanly husband—instead of being delighted that those evil actions which she used to commit so recklessly with servants and employees in those days when she took pleasure in drunkenness and every wicked action, she had now discontinued, and wanted him to do the same—when she left him against his will, brought a charge against her, claiming that she was a Christian. And she presented a petition to you, O Emperor, asking that she might be permitted first to set her household affairs in order, and then, after that was done she

1 *Rhepoúdion*: a transliteration of the Latin *repudium,* a bill of repudiation.

would defend herself against the accusation. You gave your permission. When her former husband could not answer her, he thus turned his attack on a certain Ptolemaeus, who had instructed her in Christian doctrine, in the following way. He induced his personal friend, a centurion, to summon Ptolemaeus and ask him just one question: Was he a Christian? And Ptolemaeus, being of a truthful and not deceitful or mendacious nature, confessed that he was a Christian, and was therefore placed in chains by the centurion and mistreated in prison for a long time. At length, when he appeared before Urbicus for judgment, he was again asked this one question: Was he a Christian? And again, being aware of the benefits he had gained through the teaching of Christ, he confessed to be a member of the school of divine virtue. For he who denies anything, either does so because he condemns the thing itself, or he avoids confessing it because he deems himself unworthy of and alien to it; neither of which applies to the true Christian. When Urbicus ordered him to be led away to execution, a certain Lucius, also a Christian, realizing how unreasonable the sentence was, said to Urbicus: 'What is the reason for this sentence? Why have you punished this man who is not an adulterer, or fornicator, or murderer, or thief, or robber, nor in a word convicted of any crime at all, but only confesses that he bears the name of Christian. Your judgment, Urbicus, does not become the Emperor Pius,[2] nor the Philosopher,[3] son of Caesar, nor the sacred Senate.' The only answer he made to Lucius was this: 'You also seem to be one [of this class].' And when Lucius replied, 'I certainly am,' he ordered him also to be led away to execution. And Lucius expressed his thanks, since he knew that he would soon be freed from such evil rulers,

2 'To call Marcus Aurelius 'Pius' would be utterly unprecedented.' D. C. B. 3.564

3 To give Lucius 'the name of a philosopher would be profoundly meaningless.' Cf. D. C. B. 3.564, where it is argued that the addressees here are the same as those of the *First Apology*.

and would go to the Father and King of Heaven. A third Christian also came forward, and was likewise condemned to punishment.

Chapter 3[1]

I also expect to be the victim of a plot and to be affixed to the stake by those just mentioned, or perhaps even by Crescens,[2] that lover of fanfare and ostentation.[3] For that man does not deserve the name of lover of wisdom, since he accuses us publicly in matters of which he is ignorant, claiming that Christians are atheists and irreligious, and doing this just to please and to gain the support of the deceived mob. If, indeed, he attacks us without studying the teachings of Christ, he is positively wicked, and far worse than illiterate—persons are generally careful not to argue or lie about matters of which they are ignorant. On the other hand, if he has studied them [the teachings of Christ] and has not grasped their grandeur, or, if he has and acts as he does in order not to appear to be a Christian, he is much more vile and evil, because he is then inferior even to a slave in popular and unreasonable opinion and fear. I want you to know that I put certain questions to him on this matter and I learned most assuredly that he truly knows nothing. And to show that I speak the truth, I am prepared, if our debate has not already been reported to you, to repeat it in your presence. Such a permission would be an act worthy of a royal ruler.

1 In the Mss., this chapter is found after the end of Chapter 8, but Maran inserted it here because that is how it is found in Eusebius, and because it fits in better.

2 The Cynic philosopher who was Justin's most bitter enemy.

3 Justin here plays with the words *philopsóphou,* and *philokómpou,* which sound so much like *philosóphou,* but are so different in meaning.

But if my questions and his replies were brought to your attention, it is evident to you that he knows nothing of our teachings, or, if he does know them, but, through fear of his hearers, dares not utter them, as Socrates would have, then he proves himself to be, as I said before, not a lover of wisdom, but a lover of false opinions,[4] who disregards that praiseworthy saying of Socrates: 'But no man must be honored before the truth.'[5] However, it is impossible for a Cynic like Crescens, who considers the last end to be indifferent, to recognize any good but indifference.

Chapter 4

Lest any one should say to us, 'All of you, go, kill yourselves and thus go immediately to God, and save us the trouble,' I will explain why we do not do that, and why, when interrogated, we boldly acknowledge our faith. We have been taught that God did not create the world without a purpose, but that He did so for the sake of mankind; for we have stated before[1] that God is pleased with those who imitate His perfections, but is displeased with those who choose evil, either in word or in deed. If, then, we should all kill ourselves we would be the cause, as far as it is up to us, why no one would be born and be instructed in the divine doctrines, or even why the human race might cease to exist; if we do act thus, we ourselves will be opposing the will of God. But when we are interrogated we do not deny our faith, for we are not conscious of having done any wrong, but we do consider it ungodly always not to tell the truth, which we also realize is pleasing to God; and we also now want to free you from an unfair prejudice.

4 Another play on the words *philósophos* and *philódoxos*.
5 Cf. Plato, *Republic* 10.595C.

1 Cf. 1 *Apol.* 10.

Chapter 5

But if anyone should think that, if we profess God to be our protector, we should not, as we admit, be overpowered and molested by unjust persons[1]—this difficulty, too, I will remove. When God made the universe and put all earthly things under man's dominion, and arranged the heavenly bodies for the increase of fruits and the change of seasons, and decreed a divine law for these, which He apparently also created for man's sake, He appointed His angels, whom He placed over mankind, to look after men and all things under heaven. But the angels violated their charge, fell into sin with women and begot children who are called demons.[2] Moreover, they subsequently subjected the human race to themselves, partly by magic writings, partly by the fear they instilled into them and the punishments they inflicted upon them, and partly by instructing them in the use of sacrifices, incense, and libations, which they really needed after becoming slaves of their lustful passions; and among men they engendered murders, wars, adulteries, all sorts of dissipation, and every species of sin. Thus it was that the poets and writers of legends, unaware that the bad angels and the demons begotten by them did those things to men and women, to cities and nations, ascribed them to [their] god himself [Jupiter] and to those whom they thought were sons of his seed and to the children of those whom they called his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, and to the children of their children. For they

1 Clemens Alex. (*Stromata,* 4.11.82) stated that this was a favorite pagan retort. Cf. also Arnobius, *Adv. nat.* 2.76; Minucius Felix, *Oct.* 12; Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 5.21.

2 Cf. 1 *Apol.* 5: Tertullian, *Apol.* 22.

called them by the name each of the bad angels had bestowed upon himself and his children.[3]

Chapter 6

No proper name has been bestowed upon God, the Father of all, since He is unbegotten. For, whoever has a proper name received it from a person older than himself. The words Father, and God, and Creator, and Lord, and Master are not real names, but rather terms of address derived from His beneficent deeds. But His Son, who alone is properly called Son, the Word, who was with Him [God, the Father] and was begotten[1] before all things, when in the beginning He [God, the Father] created and arranged all things through Him [the Son], is called Christ, because He was anointed and because God the Father arranged all the things of creation through Him. This name also has an unknown meaning, just as the term 'God,' which is not a real name, but the expression of man's innate[2] opinion of a thing that can scarcely be defined. But 'Jesus,'[3] which is His name both as Man and Savior, has a meaning. For He also became man, as we stated,[4] and was born in accordance with the will of God the Father for the benefit of believers, and for the defeat of the demons. Even now, your own eyes will teach you the truth of this last statement. For many demoniacs

3 In 1 *Apol.* 5, Justin said the demons chose their own names; here the bad angels, their parents, choose their names. Perhaps in the first Apology Justin uses the word *daimones* for *aggeloi,* but here the *daimones* are the children of the *aggeloi.* Cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 22; Athenagoras, *Suppl.* 25.

1 Although Justin speaks of the generation of the Son at the creation of the world, this does not detract from the eternity of the Son, for he states that the Son was with the Father before the creation of the world. Cf. Maran (*PG* 6.453).

2 Tertullian expressed the same thought with those famous words: *O testimonium animae naturaliter Christianae* (*Apol.* 17).

3 Justin understood this difference between the names 'Christ' and 'Jesus': the former belonged to the Word before the Incarnation; the latter, after the Incarnation.

4 1 *Apol.* 23 and 33.

throughout the entire world, and even in your own city, were exorcised by many of our Christians in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate; and our men cured them, and they still cure others by rendering helpless and dispelling the demons who had taken possession of these men, even when they could not be cured by all the other exorcists, and exploiters of incantations and drugs.

Chapter 7

Therefore God postpones[1] the collapse and dissolution of the universe (through which the bad angels, the demons, and men would cease to exist),[2] because of the Christian seed, which He knows to be the cause in nature [of the world's preservation]. If such were not the case, it would be impossible for you to do the things you do and be influenced by the evil demons; but the fire of judgment would descend and would completely dissolve everything, just as the flood waters once left no one but him, with his family, whom we call Noe and you call Deucalion, from whom in turn so many have been born, some of them bad, others good. In this manner, we claim that the world will finally be destroyed by fire, and not, as the Stoics believe,[3] because all things change into one another according to their disgraceful doctrine of metamorphosis. Nor do we teach [as do the Stoics] that men act and suffer according to the dictates of fate, but that by his own free will each man acts either well or evilly; and that through the influence of evil demons good men, such as Socrates and the like, are persecuted and imprisoned,

1 Cf. 1 *Apol.* 28 and 45; *Dialogue* 39; *Letter to Diognetus* 6.
2 Justin would indicate here the annihilation of power rather than of existence.
3 The Stoics considered the final destruction of the world by fire as a natural consumption, not as a punishment for sin.

while Sardanapalus, Epicurus, and the like seem to be endowed with wealth and glory. But the Stoics, ignorant of this demoniacal influence, claimed that everything takes place by the necessity of fate. But, since God from the very beginning created the race of angels and men with free will, they will justly pay the penalty in everlasting fire for the sins they have committed. Indeed, every creature is capable, by nature, of vice and of virtue. Nor would any action of theirs be worthy of praise unless they had the power to incline to either [vice or virtue]. The truth of this is shown everywhere by those legislators and philosophers who, acting according to right reason, have ordered some things to be done and others to be avoided. The Stoic philosophers also, in their moral teaching, always respect the same principles, so it is easily seen how wrong they are in their teaching on principles and incorporeal beings. For, if they state that human acts occur by fate, they will admit either that God is nothing else than those things which continually turn and change and dissolve into the same elements, and will seem to understand only corruptible things, and to affirm that God himself both in part and in whole is in every sin; or else that neither vice nor virtue is anything—which is against every sound idea, reason, and mind.

Chapter 8

We know that the followers of the Stoic teaching, because they were praiseworthy at least in their ethics, as were also the poets in some respects, because of the seed of reason implanted in all mankind, were hated and killed. As examples, we could mention Heraclitus,[1] as we already stated, and

1 It is said that Heraclitus was not killed, but died as a result of his own treatment for dropsy.

Musonius,[1] of our own times, and others. For, as we pointed out, the demons always brought it about that everyone, who strives in any way to live according to right reason and to avoid evil, be an object of hatred. Nor is it surprising that the demons are proved to be the cause why they are much more hated who do not live[2] according to only a part of the seminal word, but by the knowledge and consideration of the whole Word, which is Christ. But these demons shall suffer just punishment and torments, confined to everlasting fire; for the fact that they are overcome even now by men in the name of Jesus Christ is a sign that they and their followers will be punished in eternal fire. All the prophets foretold that it would happen thus, and so taught Jesus, our Teacher.

Chapter 9

Lest any one repeat the mistake of those so-called philosophers who claim that our statements that the sinners are punished in everlasting fire are just boastful words calculated to instill terror, and that we want men to live a virtuous life through fear, and not because such a life is pleasant, I will make this brief reply that, if it is not as we say, then there is no God; or, if there is a God, He is not concerned with men, and virtue and vice are nothing, and, as we already stated, legislators unjustly punish the transgressors of their excellent precepts. But, since these legislators are not unjust, and their Father instructs them through the Word to do as

1 There were many who bore this name in ancient times, and it is not clear which one Justin had in mind.

2 *Katà spermatikoù*: the negative particle *ou* must be inserted before this phrase to complete the sense.

He Himself does,[1] they who comply with these legislators are not unjust. If anyone should advance the remonstrance that human laws are different, and say that some men consider one thing good, another bad, while other men deem as good what the former considered bad, and as bad what they thought good, let him listen to this reply. We realize that the bad angels made laws suited to their own iniquity, which are pleasing to their counterparts among men; and the true Word, at His coming, proved that not all opinions and teachings are good, but that some are bad, and others good. Wherefore, I will repeat the same statements and utter similar ones to such men as these, and, if necessary, I shall develop them more at length.[2] But for the present I must return to my subject.

Chapter 10

Beyond doubt, therefore, our teachings are more noble than all human teaching, because Christ, who appeared on earth for our sakes, became the whole Logos, namely, Logos and body and soul.[1] Everything that the philosophers and legislators discovered and expressed well, they accomplished through their discovery and contemplation of some part of the Logos. But, since they did not have a full knowledge of the Logos, which is Christ, they often contradicted themselves. And those who were born before Christ assumed human nature were dragged into law courts as irreligious and med-

1 Cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 45; St. Augustine, *De lib. arbit.* 1.15.

2 The meaning is this: Since legislators order some things to be done and others to be avoided, and since God, as Legislator, has given us a law, then it follows that man has free will either to obey or disobey the law, and the disobedient are unjust.

1 St. Augustine, *Sermo* 214.7, thus expressed this thought: *Totus Filius Dei Verbum et homo, atque, ut expressius dicam, Verbum, anima et caro.*

dling persons, when they tried in human narrowness to think out and prove things by reason. Socrates, the most ardent of all in this regard, was accused of the very crimes that are imputed to us. They claimed that he introduced new deities[2] and rejected the state-sponsored gods. But what he did was to ostracize Homer[3] and the other poets, and to instruct men to expel the evil demons and those who perpetrated the deeds narrated by the poets; and to exhort men by meditation to learn more about God who was unknown to them, saying: 'It is not an easy matter to find the Father and Creator of all things, nor, when He is found, is it safe to announce Him to all men.'[4] Yet, our Christ did all this through His own power. There was no one who believed so much in Socrates as to die for his teaching, but not only philosophers and scholars believed in Christ, of whom even Socrates had a vague knowledge (for He was and is the Logos who is in every person, and who predicted things to come first through the prophets and then in person when He assumed our human nature and feelings, and taught us these doctrines), but also workmen and men wholly uneducated, who all scorned glory, and fear, and death. Indeed, this is brought about by the power of the ineffable Father, and not through the instrumentality of human reason.

Chapter 11

Neither should we Christians be put to death, nor would evil men and demons prevail over us, were it not for the fact that absolutely every man who is born must also, by reason of a

2 Cf. Plato, *Apol.* Ch. 14.
3 This whole statement was taken from Plato, *Republic* 2.377 ff. and 10. 595 ff.
4 A loose quotation from Plato, *Tim.* 28C. Cf. also Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.42.

debt, be subject to death. Thus, when we liquidate this debt, we render thanks. Now, for the sake of Crescens and those who rant like him, we deem it proper and fitting to relate here what Xenophon wrote.[1] Hercules, relates Xenophon, once came to a place where three roads met, and there he found Virtue and Vice, who appeared to him in the guise of women. And Vice, in a costly and seductive dress, with an expression made alluring by such adornments, and being instantly fascinating to look at, said to Hercules that, if he would follow her, she would see to it that his whole life would be one of pleasure and that he would be arrayed in the most brilliant finery, such as she herself was then wearing. And Virtue, who was loathsome in appearance and dress, said: 'If you will obey me, you will be adorned, not with passing and perishable ornaments or beauty, but with everlasting and precious adornments.' Indeed, we believe that the one who avoids what only appears to be good and strives for what is considered difficult and unreasonable, will attain happiness. For Vice, to disguise her own actions, appropriated the qualities of Virtue which really are excellent, by imitating what is incorruptible (for Vice neither possesses nor is able to effect incorruptibility) and enslaves low-minded men, attributing her own evil habits to Virtue. But, those who have understood the things that really are good are also unspoiled in virtue. Such persons, every intelligent man should conclude, were the Christians, the athletes, and those who performed the deeds which the poets narrate of the so-called gods;[2] and this conclusion should be drawn from the fact that we Christians scorn escaping from death.

1 Xenophon (*Men.* 2.1.21ff.) gives Prodicus credit for this fictitious story.
2 E.g., Hercules, who is said to have scorned death.

Chapter 12

Indeed, when I myself revelled in the teachings of Plato, and heard the Christians misrepresented and watched them stand fearless in the face of death and of every other thing that was considered dreadful, I realized the impossibility of their living in sinful pleasure. For, what sensual or self-indulgent person, who approves of the eating of human flesh,[1] would welcome death that he might be despoiled of his pleasures, and would not rather always try to continue in his present manner of life, and to elude the public officers; and much less would he be apt to denounce himself when the penalty was death? The evil demons have caused these things also to be effected by wicked men. For, after inflicting the death penalty on some because of the false charges lodged against us, they subjected our servants, some of them children and women, to torture, and forced from them by these terrible torments a confession of those fictitious crimes which they themselves publicly commit. But we are not in the least concerned about such crimes, since we do not commit them, having as witness of our thoughts and actions the Unbegotten and Ineffable God. For why did we not acknowledge that we consider these things good, and show how they are divine philosophy, affirming that the mysteries of Saturn[2] have in homicide and in drinking blood the same effect as what you do before the idol[3] you venerate, on which you sprinkle not only the blood of brute animals, but also of men, making a libation of the slain man's blood through the most distinguished and most noble person in your midst? And by imitating

1 An allusion to a favorite pagan accusation against the Christians, which was that of anthropophagy. Cf. 1 *Apol.* 26 n. 6.

2 The favorite victims of the Phoenician Saturn were boys. Cf. Lactantius, *Inst. div.* 1.21; Tertullian, *Apol.* 9.

3 The idol of Jupiter Latiaris. Cf. Tertullian, *Apol.* 9.

Jupiter and the other gods in sodomy and sinful relations with women, might they not, in defense of their actions, cite the writings of Epicurus and the poets? But, because we persuade men to avoid such customs and those who practice them, together with their imitators, as we now have striven hard to persuade you with these words, we are assailed in many ways. But we are not in the least worried, for we realize that God is the just supervisor of all. Would that even now some man would ascend a lofty platform and cry out in a loud voice:[4] 'Be ashamed and blush, you who accuse the innocent of the very crimes you yourselves openly commit; and things of which you and your gods are guilty, you charge to those persons who have not the slightest part in them. Change your ways, and come to your senses.'

Chapter 13

When I learned of the evil camouflage which the wicked demons had thrown around the divine doctrines of the Christians to deter others from following them, I had to laugh at the authors of these lies, at the camouflage itself, and at the popular reaction. I am proud to say that I strove with all my might to be known as a Christian, not because the teachings of Plato are different from those of Christ, but because they are not in every way similar; neither are those of other writers, the Stoics, the poets, and the historians. For each one of them, seeing, through his participation of the seminal Divine Word, what was related to it, spoke very well. But, they who contradict themselves in important matters evidently did not acquire the unseen [that is, heavenly] wisdom and the indisputable knowledge. The truths which

4 Tragic voice, i.e., the loud voice employed in the recitation, through a mask, of Greek tragedies.

men in all lands have rightly spoken belong to us Christians. For we worship and love, after God the Father, the Word who is from the Unbegotten and Ineffable God, since He even became Man for us, so that by sharing in our sufferings He also might heal us. Indeed, all writers, by means of the engrafted seed of the Word which was implanted in them, had a dim glimpse of the truth. For the seed of something and its imitation, given in proportion to one's capacity, is one thing, but the thing itself, which is shared and imitated according to His grace, is quite another.

Chapter 14

We therefore beseech you to publish this pronouncement, adding your comment to it, so that others may know our customs and be released from the bonds of false beliefs and of ignorance of good; for by their own fault they have become worthy of punishment. Promulgate these words, too, in order that these truths may be made public for all men, because by nature man can know good and evil; and because by denouncing us, of whom they do not know whether they really do such disgraceful things as they pretend, and because they revel in their gods who committed such actions themselves and still permit mankind to commit them, and because by punishing us with death or chains or some such penalty, as if we committed such actions, they so condemn themselves that other judges are not needed.

Chapter 15

[Concerning my countryman[1] Simon Magus, I looked with utter disdain upon his impious and deceitful teachings.]

1 Both were from Samaria.

If you will only approve this writing, we will expose him in the eyes of all, so that, if at all possible, they may be converted. For this purpose only have we written these words. After a just deliberation you will find that our teachings are not disgraceful, but are more sublime than all human wisdom. If you do not think them so, at least they bear no resemblance to the teachings of the Sotadists,[2] the Philaenidians,[3] the Archestratians, the Epicureans, and other such doctrines of the poets, with which everyone can familiarize himself, both by hearing them as they are recited and reading them. And now, having done the best we could, we conclude with a prayer that the men of every land be deemed fit to receive the truth. And may you also, as befits your piety and wisdom, judge the case with justice for your own sakes.[4]

2 Sotades (from Trace or Crete) gained much fame from his obscene poetry in the third century B.C. Cf. Strabo, *Geogr.* 14.573.

3 The followers of the poetess Philaenis, the composer of a popular textbook on poetry.

4 Cf. Tertullian, *Ad Scap.* 1: *Itaque hunc libellum non nobis timentes misimus, sed vobis et omnibus inimicis nostris.*